

REMARKS

Reconsideration and further examination of this application are hereby requested. Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6-22 are currently pending in the application. Claims 3 and 5 have been canceled. Claim 22 is newly presented. No new matter has been entered.

A. Information Disclosure Statement

The Information Disclosure Statement has been objected to as not including copies of three cited foreign references from the International Search Report. Copies of the three cited foreign references are enclosed along with a copy of the form SB08A as previously filed. Consideration of these references and indication of such on a return copy of the form SB08A is respectfully requested. See M.P.E.P. § 1893.03(g).

B. Objection to the Specification

The specification has been objected to as containing an incorporation by reference that is purported to be improper. Applicant notes that since no essential information in any incorporated documents is necessary to overcome any part of the Office Action, explicit incorporation is unnecessary. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that this objection be withdrawn.

C. The Anticipation Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 6-21 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kreczko (US Pat. 5123677). This

rejection is respectfully traversed based on the following arguments.

In order for a patent claim to be anticipated by the prior art, each and every limitation of that claim must be found within the four corners of a single prior art reference.

Independent claim 1 (as amended) recites:

free ends are bent back and inward in such a manner that a gap is present between these free ends and opposed contact surfaces of the spring arms.

See claim 1 at lines 10-12.

The coupling disclosed by Kreczko has no such feature. The free ends of the release buttons 100 taught by Kreczko flare outwardly (not "bent back and inward" as claimed) and do not have gaps between those free ends and opposed contact surfaces of themselves (as is also claimed). Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Kreczko does not anticipate claim 1, nor claims 2 and 4 depending therefrom.

Independent claim 6 (as amended) recites:

spring arm interacts elastically with said stop piece to limit travel of said snap element in a release position.

See claim 6 at last 3 lines.

The coupling disclosed by Kreczko has no such feature. The release buttons 100 taught by Kreczko do not interact elastically with a stop piece of the coupling. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Kreczko does not anticipate claim 6, nor claims 7-21 depending therefrom.

In view of the above arguments, Applicant respectfully asks that the anticipation rejections of claims 1, 2, 4, and 6-21 be withdrawn.

D. New Claim 22

New claim 22 recites the feature:

spring arm is bent inwardly to form an open, elastically deformable eyelet between the first snap element end and an inner surface of said spring arm, such that said spring arm imparts a return force to the respective snap element.

See claim 22 at the last four lines.

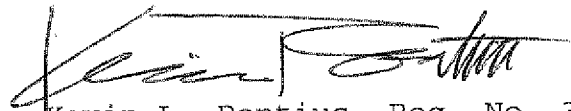
There is no teaching in the prior art of such an open, elastically deformable eyelet structure as is claimed. Nor is there in the prior art a spring arm that itself imparts a return force to its snap element. Support for these features is found in Applicants disclosure at numbered paragraphs 0006 and 0018 of the substitute specification.

CONSLUSION

For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance with claims 1, 2, 4, and 6-22. If there remain any issues that may be disposed of via a telephonic interview, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number given below.

The Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is authorized to charge any fees necessary, or credit any overpayment concerning this application to Deposit Account No. 04-1061 in the name of Dickinson Wright PLLC.

Respectfully submitted,
DICKINSON WRIGHT, PLLC



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